

Warm Hands but Cold Hearts (Message #5)

Revelation 2: 1-7

Tonight we begin our study on the 7 churches mentioned in [Rev.1:11](#). Jesus speaks to each of these churches individually. We can view them in 3 different ways: 1) **Prophetically** – they represent the different stages of the church age from Pentecost to the Tribulation. Ephesus was the 1st, from Pentecost to 100 AD. 2) **Literally** – these letters were sent to literal churches that lived and functioned as a body of believers. 3) **Personally** – these letters can be applied to the church today, as well as the individual believers who make them up. This is the view we will take.

Jesus reveals the mystery concerning the [seven stars and the seven candlesticks](#) in [Rev.1:20](#) – *The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.*

Now, Ephesus was a powerful city in its day. It was located near the Aegean Sea with a large harbor for commercial trade. It was considered a “free city” under Roman rule and was allowed self-government. It was a religious city as well. Christianity wasn’t the only religion in Ephesus. In fact, Ephesus was home to the temple of Diana, one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world. She was the Greek goddess of fertility. This caused much wickedness and immorality in Ephesus. The church there faced a difficult task. They were well established, founded by Paul. Jesus reminds them of their safety within His hand in [v.1](#). Let’s consider the church that had: [Warm Hands but Cold Hearts](#).

I. The Witness of the Church – Jesus begins with words of encouragement for them due to their witness among the world. Even though they were opposed, they carried on for the Lord. He recognized that they were:

A. A Sacrificing Church (2a) – *I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil:* Jesus spoke of their: 1) **Works** – that which they had accomplished for the glory of God. He had seen their works. 2) **Labor** – literally toiling to the point of exhaustion. Their labor was fervent for the Lord. They served at every opportunity. This isn’t the twice a year or Sunday morning only crowd. 3) **Patience** – they were undeterred by the opposition. Their focus was on serving the Lord whatever the cost.

- We need to be a sacrificing church; one that is diligent and fervent in the Lord’s work, even in the face of adversity. Our service must be more than once a week.

B. A Separated Church (2b, 6) – v.2b – and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: v.6 – But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

- The church could not bear them which are evil. They had tried the doctrine of the false teachers and rejected them. They lived among a sinful society, but refused to be tainted by their filth. Thank God for churches who refuse to conform to the ways of the world!
- They also hated the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, v.6. These are thought to be a sect that taught man's actions didn't affect his spiritual condition, a "do as you please" doctrine. It is thought that they developed a "priestly order" or hierarchy among the church to control the people. The church at Ephesus wasn't deceived by their false doctrine and remained true to God.
- The Nicolaitanes had a powerful influence. Their deeds at Ephesus, v.6, became doctrine in Pergamos, v.15, **So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate.** It is important that we remain separated from the world. What we ignore today will be accepted tomorrow. We must stand for the sake of our Lord and our children. Everything we do at Pilgrim ought to be founded on the Word of God. A separated church won't be a popular church, but it will be a powerful church!

C. A Steadfast Church (3) – **And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.** Even though the work was difficult and opposition was strong, they stuck with the stuff. They remained steadfast and didn't faint.

- Our church has remained since 1837. We are still worshipping tonight, but we must not take that for granted! Let us continue to remain steadfast in our work for the Lord so that future generations can worship in truth. I wonder what our witness is. I can assure you this world knows and our Lord knows.

I. The Witness of the Church

II. The Weakness of the Church (4) – **Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.** Jesus applauded their witness and now He addresses their weakness. **They had left their first love.** They had left their priority love, not the first in order, but first in rank! There was a time when their love for Jesus was vibrant and consuming, but they had lost the zeal of their love.

- No doubt they still loved Jesus, but the deep, passionate love for Him was gone. Outwardly they were busy and steadfast, but inwardly they were cold and indifferent.
- How tragic for a child of God to grow cold toward the Lord. Our activities and works may please the Lord, but a loving heart is what He really desires. Do you remember the day you were saved, the love that abounded in your heart? You couldn't seem to get enough to satisfy your desire for the Lord. You loved to read the Word, come to church, and pray. You were thrilled to be a new born Christian.
- Sadly our love tends to fade with time. The zeal we had is no longer there. Do we come out of love or habit? Do we sing, teach, or preach out of devotion or obligation? Oh how we need to regain our first love! If you aren't as excited and devoted as before, you've lost your first love.

I. The Witness of the Church

II. The Weakness of the Church (4)

III. The Warning of Christ – Jesus has spoken of their witness and weakness and now He offers a warning to heed.

A. He Speaks of Remembrance (5) – Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen.

Jesus reminds them of the day that His joy abounded in their hearts; when His light beamed from their lives. This was a time when they walked close and shared an intimate fellowship with Him. Now that light has faded; they no longer stand where they once did. The flame has faded into a dying ember.

- We need to remember what Jesus has done for us and His light rekindled in our hearts. We know our place; we just need to get in it and allow Jesus the priority in our lives.

B. He Speaks of Repentance (5) – ...and repent. A genuine remembrance of our former relationship ought to bring about repentance. This is literally an urgent appeal for an immediate change of attitude and conduct before it's too late. Jesus is saying **REPENT** for your lack of love for Me!

- Repentance has fallen by the wayside in the modern church. Our hearts have grown so cold that we no longer see a need for real repentance. The altars that were filled with the tears of those desiring a closer walk with God are now empty. Few ever come and bow before a holy

God in an attitude of repentance. Sin doesn't just go away; it must be dealt with. Repentance is the only way!

C. He Speaks of Returning (5) – ...and do the first works. We are told to do the “first works”. It is time to do the things we used to do for the Lord before we became so busy and satisfied. Do you ever wonder why our churches have grown stagnant and folks no longer come? We are no longer doing the first works, the priorities, those things pleasing to God.

- Real worship is no longer a priority for God's people. We can come or stay at home, it doesn't matter either way. We can go for days without prayer, Bible study, or even mentioning the Lord. The first works are key to revival. When Jesus has the priority, He will manifest Himself in our midst.

D. He Speaks of Removing (5) – or else I will come quickly, and remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. Jesus gives a solemn warning to the church, including our congregation. He says we must **remember, repent, and return** or else He will **remove** our candlestick.

- The church at Ephesus failed to heed His warning and He removed their light. There are many churches that have lost their light for Jesus. They are still meeting, but there is no power, no conviction, no joy, or praise. They have a form of religion and that is all.

- I don't want Pilgrim to lose its light. We have a wonderful privilege to shine in this dark world. We must heed the voice of God if our light is to remain. I certainly don't want to be responsible before a holy God for our light being “snuffed” out!

E. He Speaks of Redemption (7) – He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God. His words were not received by all. Only those who have an ear for the spiritual things of God can discern His will. Many in our day have an ear, but they don't have an ear to hear from the Lord.

- Sadly all who are in our churches are not saved. We must **overcome** to partake of the tree of life in the paradise of God. We cannot overcome the sin and weakness of the flesh apart from the Lord. Our faith must be founded in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Many would be deceived and led away by the false doctrine, but the pure in heart would receive the eternal reward. Ultimately our salvation is of utmost importance. We must have that settled above all else!

The church at Ephesus had good intentions. They were diligent in their labor, but their love had grown cold. Where is our love tonight? Do we love Jesus as we ought to? A busy life doesn't always mean a right relationship.

I fear that we too have been guilty of warm hands but cold hearts. I want our light to shine brightly for the Lord. How about you? If you're not as close to the Lord as you once were, why not come and rededicate your life to Him.